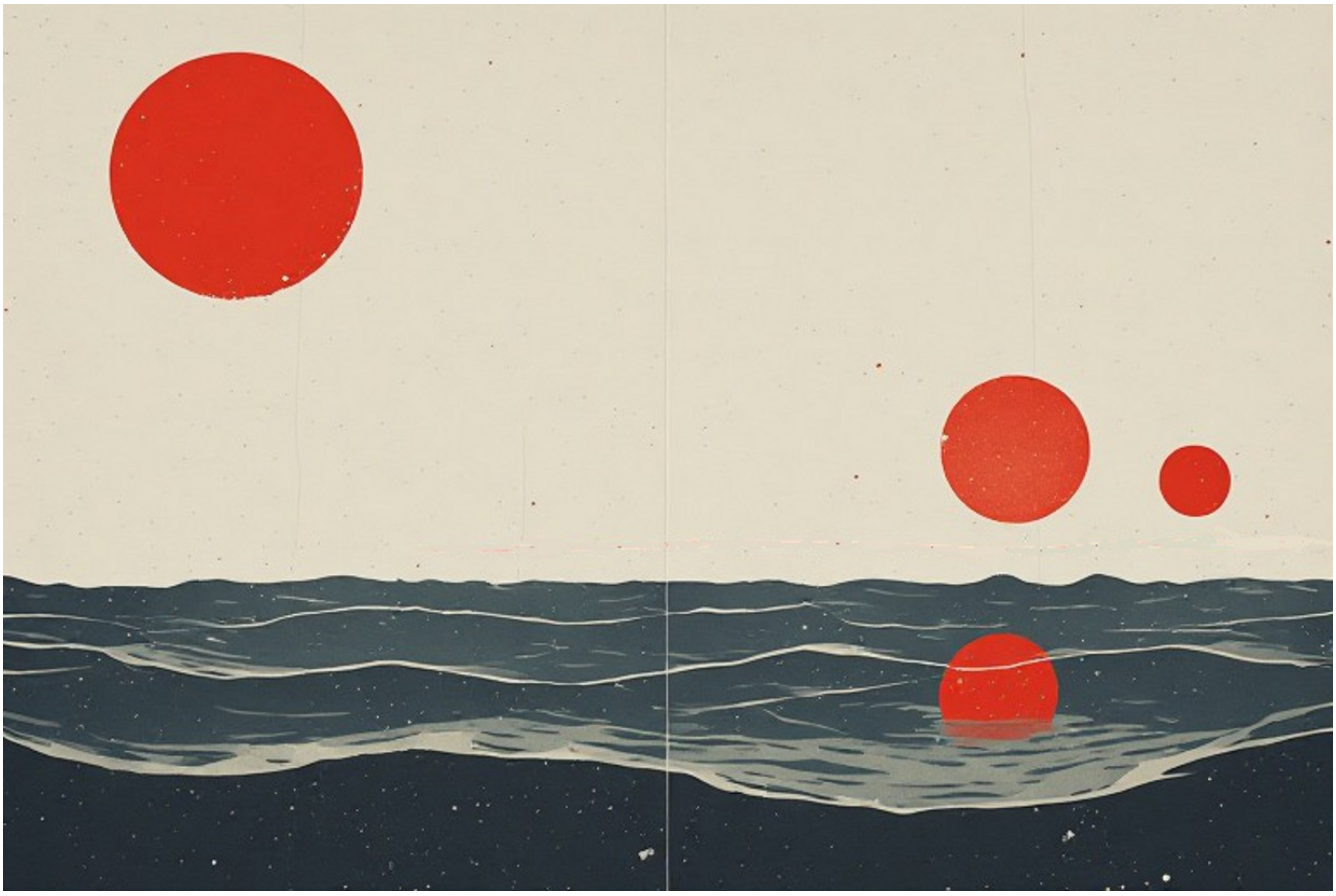

THE TIDE WITCH'S BOOK OF HOURS

《潮巫時辰書》(Chao Wu Shi Chen Shu)

A Daily Office for the Solitary Practitioner of the Salt Archive

ZJC (2026)

HOW TO START YOUR PRACTICE

A Brief Orientation for the New Tide Witch

You Found the Shore

You have found your way to the Salt Archive—perhaps through the Chao Wu Lu, perhaps through a recommendation, perhaps through a dream of the sea that led you here. You are holding three texts:

- **The Tide Witch's Book of Hours** — the daily practice
- **Keeping Shore** — what to do when things go wrong
- **The Landlocked Tide Witch** — how to practice when the sea is far

They are offered freely. They are not obligations. They are invitations.

This brief document is the hand that reaches out to you across the water. It says: *"You are here. That is enough. Begin."*

Where to Begin

First: Read the Book of Hours.

Do not read it as a manual to be memorized. Read it as a tide chart. It describes the rhythm of a day: Dawn, Noon, Dusk, and Midnight. Each Hour is a small, repeated act. None of them are requirements. They are invitations to pay attention.

If you read nothing else, read the Dawn Hour.

Second: Do the Dawn Hour tomorrow morning.

You need only three things:

- A bowl of water
- A candle
- A window facing east (or a quiet place to sit)

Before the sun rises, light the candle. Sit before the bowl. Gaze at the water. Watch the light move across its surface. Breathe. Then speak the words. That is the practice. That is enough.

It takes ten minutes. If you forget, do it the next day. The sea does not keep a ledger of absences.

Third: Read Keeping Shore after your first week.

You may not need it yet. But you should know it exists. It is the tradition's safety net: what to do if a ritual fails, if you feel overwhelmed, if you have a disturbing dream, if you begin to feel that you are losing your footing. Read it so that you know, before you need it, that you are not alone.

Fourth: If you are far from the sea, read The Landlocked Tide Witch.

It is not a consolation prize. It is a practice of its own. The bowl on the windowsill is not a substitute for the ocean—it is a window onto it. The sea is already inside you. The salt is in your blood. The tide is in your breath. You are not excluded.

Some Principles to Hold

You are not doing it wrong.

The tradition does not demand perfection. It expects cycles. You will have days when the ritual feels hollow. You will have days when you forget. You will have seasons when the sea is silent. This is not failure. This is the tide going out. It will return.

Start small.

Do not attempt the great rituals—the Descent to the Salt-Kin, the Ghost Tide Exorcism, the Dragon King's Bargain—in your first year. The tradition is not a race. It is a slow, cumulative attention. The small acts—lighting a candle at dusk, pouring a bowl of water at dawn—are the foundation. The rest grows from them.

If you are struggling, stop.

The tradition is not a test of endurance. It is a practice of attention. If you feel overwhelmed, disoriented, or afraid, stop. Rest. Return to the Ordinary Day. The sea will still be there when you are ready.

You are allowed to adapt.

The tradition is rooted in the Fujian coast, in the salt air of the China Sea. But it is not bound to any one place. The Landlocked Tide Witch offers adaptations for those who live inland. The Manual of Ritual Materials offers substitutions for those who cannot find the prescribed ingredients. The sea does not demand precision. It demands sincerity.

If You Want to Go Deeper

Once you have established the Ordinary Day—once the Dawn Hour has become a rhythm, once the Dusk Hour has become a habit—you may wish to go deeper.

The core texts of the Salt Archive are available on the Internet Archive:

- The Chao Wu Lu — the foundational grimoire
- The Salt-Water Yi — the Book of Changes of the Sea
- The Salt-Kin Codex — the kinship of sharks and Tide Witches
- The Daoist Ocean Tarot — the divination system

The other supplements—the Manual of Ritual Materials, the Field Guide to Chinese Spirits, the Pronunciation Companion, the Workbook, the Cross-Reference Audit—are available in the same place.

But you do not need to read them all. You do not need to master the entire tradition. You need only begin.

A Final Word

You have found your way to the shore. That is not an accident. Something in you recognized the salt. Something in you remembered the sea.

The tradition will meet you where you are. It does not ask you to believe anything. It does not ask you to renounce anything. It asks only that you pay attention—to the water, to the moon, to the tides of your own inner sea.

You are not a failure. You are a beginner. And a beginner is exactly who the tradition is for.

The tide is turning. The Hour is now. The rest is salt.

ABOUT THE SALT ARCHIVE

A Brief Note for the Reader

The Salt Archive is a collection of texts for the Tide Witch tradition—a practice that draws on the maritime cosmology of the Fujian coast, Daoist ritual, the kinship of salt and sea, and the lived experience of women who have found their power at the water's edge.

The tradition is not a religion. It does not require belief. It asks only for attention—to the tide, to the moon, to the inner sea that moves within every body made of salt water.

The Core Texts

The following texts form the foundation of the tradition and are available on the Internet Archive:

- **The Chao Wu Lu** — the foundational grimoire. It contains the rituals, talismans, and teachings that define the Tide Witch path.

- **The Salt-Water Yi** — the Book of Changes of the Sea. A 64-hexagram oracle that speaks in the language of tides, storms, and the deep.
- **The Salt-Kin Codex** — the kinship of sharks and Tide Witches. A guide to the Salt-Kin as Manifest Ancestors, teachers, and dream-visitors.
- **The Daoist Ocean Tarot** — a 78-card divination system rooted in the imagery of the Salt Archive.

These texts are the tradition itself. They are meant to be read, studied, returned to, and argued with.

The Practical Companions

The text you are holding is part of the second layer of the Salt Archive: the practical companions. These are not scripture. They are teaching texts—pastoral, adaptive, and practical.

They include:

- **The Book of Hours** — a daily practice for the solitary practitioner
- **Keeping Shore** — what to do when things go wrong
- **The Landlocked Tide Witch** — adapting the tradition for those far from the sea
- **The Manual of Ritual Materials** — logistics, sourcing, and substitutions
- **The Field Guide to Chinese Spirits and Folk Cosmology** — a relational guide to the presences in the Tide Witch's world
- **The Pronunciation Companion** — a guide to the Chinese terms used throughout the tradition
- **The Workbook** — a journal and logbook for the practicing Tide Witch
- **The Cross-Reference and Consistency Audit** — an editorial review of the entire archive

These texts are offered freely. They are not obligations. They are invitations.

A Note on the Tradition's Roots

The Tide Witch tradition draws on Chinese maritime folk religion, Daoist ritual practice, and the specific coastal culture of Fujian province—home to Mazu, the Dragon Kings, and a long history of women who practiced at the edge of the sea. The tradition honors these roots. It does not claim to be a reconstruction or a direct lineage. It is a living practice, shaped by attention and respect.

If you are a practitioner of a living Chinese tradition, you will recognize echoes of your own practice here. If you are new to these waters, you are welcome. The tradition does not require you to be anything other than what you are.

Why These Texts Are Free

These texts are offered without charge because the tradition believes that spiritual practice should not be gated by wealth. The sea does not charge admission. Neither should the words that teach us to read it.

If you find these texts useful, pass them on. Build a fire on the shore. Let your light be seen. The sea does not keep a ledger of your absences. Neither should we.

PREFACE: HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is not a law. It is a tide chart.

The Hours contained here are not obligations. They are invitations. A Tide Witch who misses a Dawn Hour does not sin. She simply returns to the practice when she can. The sea does not punish. The sea waits.

The Daily Office is the skeleton that holds the body upright. It is the small, repeated act that, over time, shapes the soul. A practitioner might not perform the Ghost Tide Exorcism more than once or twice in a lifetime. She might not cast the full Rite of the Salt-Kin Spirit except at the dark moon. But she can light a candle at dusk. She can pour a bowl of salt water at dawn. She can stand barefoot at the water's edge—or at her kitchen window, facing the memory of the sea—and speak a single line from the Chao Wu Lu. Over years, these small acts accumulate. They become the shell. They become the ark.

The book is organized into three parts:

Part One: The Ordinary Day. The four daily Hours—Dawn, Noon, Dusk, and Midnight—with their invocations, actions, and silences. This is the plain, steady rhythm that sustains the practitioner between the great tides.

Part Two: The Lunar Variations. Brief instructions for adapting the daily Hours to the four phases of the moon, drawn from the Gathering of Ocean Water in the Chao Wu Lu.

Part Three: The Great Tides. The expanded Offices for the eight feasts of the Ritual Year and the feasts of the three Matriarchs. These are the high holy days of the Tide Witch's calendar.

Appendix: A Psalter of the Tide. A small collection of invocations, proverbs, and sacred phrases from the Salt Archive, arranged for recitation at any Hour.

May this book be stained with salt and candle wax. May it be carried to the shore and back. May it be alive.

The tide is turning. The Hour is now.

PART ONE: THE ORDINARY DAY

The Four Daily Hours

The Ordinary Day follows the four turns of the sun, which correspond to the four suits of the Daoist Ocean Tarot and the four cardinal directions.

Hour	Time	Suit	Direction	Quality
Dawn	Sunrise	Anchors (Metal)	East	Clarity, observation, setting intention
Noon	Midday	Lanterns (Fire)	South	Action, righteous power, centeredness
Dusk	Sunset	Tides (Water)	West	Release, gratitude, examination of conduct

Hour	Time	Suit	Direction	Quality
Midnight	The dark hour	Nets (Earth)	North	Descent, stillness, encounter with the deep self

DAWN: THE WATCHTOWER'S GAZE

Suit: Anchors (Metal / Intellect)
Hexagram: 20, The Watchtower's Gaze

Rise before the sun, if possible. If you are near the sea, go to the shore. If you are landlocked, go to a window facing east, or simply sit in a quiet room. You will need a bowl of clean water, a candle, and your Wave Journal.

Light the candle. Place the bowl of water before you. Sit in stillness. Let your breathing slow until it matches the rhythm of the waves. Then speak:

"The sea writes constantly. Every wave is a stroke. Every tide is a sentence. Every storm is an argument. Most people see water. The Tide Witch learns to read."

If you are at the sea, stand barefoot at the tide line. Gaze at the water with a soft focus for one hundred slow breaths. If you are landlocked, gaze at the bowl of water. After the hundred breaths, close your eyes. The first pattern you recall is the primary answer.

Open your Wave Journal. Record the date, the tidal state, the lunar phase, and the pattern or feeling you observed.

Speak a single sentence that sets the course for the day. It should be simple and true.

Extinguish the candle. Pour the water back into the sea or onto the earth. The Dawn Hour is complete.

NOON: THE CRIMSON JUNK

Suit: Lanterns (Fire / Ambition)
Hexagram: 55, The Krill-Swarm's Zenith

At midday, pause wherever you are. Find a moment of stillness. If possible, stand in direct sunlight. If not, close your eyes and imagine the sun at its zenith.

Speak: *"Now is when shadows kneel—and honest women squint."*

Ask yourself three questions. Do not answer them quickly:

1. What is fully visible now that was hidden this morning?
2. Am I walking the sandbar with grace?
3. What single, small act of clarity can I perform before sunset?

If you are in a season of overwhelming abundance, take a moment to visualize the golden tide swirling around you. Part it with your attention. Find the quiet, still center. Breathe into it.

Touch a coin to your forehead, or press your thumb to the center of your brow. Whisper: *"Clarity. Clarity. Clarity."*

The Noon Hour is complete.

DUSK: THE TIDE-WALKER'S TREAD

Suit: Tides (Water / Emotion)
Hexagram: 10, The Tide-Walker's Tread

At sunset, go to the sea, or to a window facing west, or to your altar. You will need a bowl of water, a candle, and a small dish of salt.

Light the candle. Take a pinch of salt and let it fall into the water. Speak:

"The tide withdraws. The day ends. What was done, is done. What was not done, is not done. The sea receives both. The sea does not judge. I walk the sandbar home."

Review the day gently. Where did you walk with grace? Where did you slip? What word should you have spoken or withheld?

If you carry a burden, perform the Underwater Lamp in miniature: visualize the burden as a dark stone, release it into the bowl of water. Speak: *"What the storm took, the sea will keep. But what remains, the light will tend—one breath, one stroke, one world to mend."*

Speak aloud one thing from the day for which you are grateful.

Extinguish the candle. Pour the water into the sea or onto the earth. The Dusk Hour is complete.

MIDNIGHT: THE ABYSSAL TRENCH

Suit: Nets (Earth / Resources)
Hexagram: 29, The Abyssal Trench

This Hour is optional. It is for the practitioner who wakes in the dark, or who keeps vigil, or who seeks the dream. If you sleep through the night, the Dawn Hour will greet you.

If you rise, light a single black or undyed candle. Sit before it. Speak in a whisper:

"The abyss is not a place you fall into. It is a place you choose to dive into, again and again, until you learn to breathe water as easily as air."

Bring your attention to your Ocean of Qi. Let your breath fall there. Bring to mind a disturbance—a fear, a grief, a circumstance. Picture it as a wave. Do not push back. Do not flee. Be the shore. The wave arrives. It breaks. It recedes. You remain.

If you are seeking a dream, hold your Kinship Token to your chest and whisper: *"Let my sleeping mind be a gate. Let my sleeping body be a vessel."*

Extinguish the candle. Return to bed. The Midnight Hour is complete.

PART TWO: THE LUNAR VARIATIONS

Brief notes for adapting the Daily Hours to the phases of the moon.

New Moon (Shuo Yue):

- **Dawn:** Perform in silence. Do not write in the Wave Journal.
- **Noon:** Omit. Rest instead.
- **Dusk:** Use New Moon Water. Replace the Underwater Lamp with a simple salt offering.
- **Midnight:** Extended. Favorable for the Black Tide Mirror and Descent to the Salt-Kin.

Waxing Moon:

- **Dawn:** Add the Kelp's Ascent meditation. Visualize a kelp frond growing toward the light.
- **Dusk:** Name one thing that is growing.

Full Moon (Wang Yue):

- **Dawn:** Use Full Moon Water. Extend the Observation.
- **Noon:** Brief, but do not omit.
- **Dusk:** Perform the full Underwater Lamp. Float a candle on water if possible.
- **Midnight:** Favorable for scrying and the Rabbit's Mortar dream-working.

Waning Moon:

- **Dawn:** Simple and unadorned.
- **Dusk:** Add the Limpet's Choice. Name one thing you are releasing to the tide.
- **Midnight:** Favorable for the Ghost-Crab's Shedding meditation.

PART THREE: THE GREAT TIDES

The expanded Offices for the eight feasts of the Ritual Year, together with the feasts of the three Matriarchs.

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1. THE KRAKEN'S TURNING

The Winter Solstice. Sacred to the Return of the Light.

This Office is observed as a vigil from sunset to dawn. The full text appears in the Lunar-Solar Tidal Calendar of the Salt Archive. In brief:

- **Sunset:** Light a single black candle. Speak the invocation of Hexagram 24.
- **First Watch (Sunset to Midnight):** Sit in stillness. Practice the Weak Water Meditation.
- **Midnight Turning:** Stand. Face north. Speak: *"The return is not a reward; it is a law."*
- **Second Watch (Midnight to Dawn):** Rest in the stillness of the Leviathan. Do not strive.
- **Dawn:** Extinguish the candle. Face east. Speak: *"The Kraken's eye is fully open. I sail with the returning tide."*

This feast coincides with Xiwangmu's Stillness, the full vigil of which appears among the Offices of the Matriarchs below.

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2. THE TIDE SURGE

Early February. The First Turning of the Tide After the Solstice.

Hexagram: 1, The Nine-Dragon Fleet, and 3, The Pearl Diver's First Breath
Color: Red and pale gray
Tone: Tender, vulnerable, full of the anxiety and hope of new beginnings.

Observed at dawn. Go to the shore before sunrise with a bowl of Dawn Water, a red candle, and a small, hollow, buoyant object—a gourd, a coconut shell, a sealed jar.

At first light, light the candle. Speak the invocation of the Nine-Dragon Fleet.

If you are beginning something new, perform the Gourd Leap: fill the vessel with seawater, speak aloud what you are leaving behind, leap over the vessel, speak aloud what you are becoming.

If you are renewing your vows, wade into the water and speak the oath of the Tide Surge again.

If you have new tools, consecrate them now with the Dawn Water.

Extinguish the candle. Do not look back. The new year has begun.

3. THE SPAWNING REEF

The Spring Equinox. Sacred to the Dragon King's Exhalation and the Gathering of All Life.

Hexagram: 4, The Spawning Reef, and 11, The Dragon's Exhalation
Color: Gold, silver, and pale green
Tone: Ecstatic, communal, generative.

The full Office appears in the Book of Hours. In brief:

- **Dawn:** Greet the sunrise with the story of the Dragon King's Exhalation. Cast an offering into the sea and speak aloud what you are ready to create. Gather Full Moon Water.
- **Noon:** Light two candles, gold and silver. Meditate on balance.
- **Dusk:** Perform the Release of the Spawning Reef. Hold a token of your creative work, name it aloud, drop it into a bowl of seawater. Pour three cups: one for yourself, one for the ancestors, one for the Tide Witches who came before.
- **Midnight:** Silence. Rest.

This feast coincides with Mazu's Tide, the Feast of the Silver Lady. The full Office for Mazu is observed on the first full moon after the equinox.

4. THE LANTERN-SHARK'S ECLIPSE

The First Dark Moon After the Spawning Reef. Early May.

Hexagram: 36, The Lantern-Shark's Eclipse
Color: Black and faint blue-green
Tone: Watchful, protective, scarred. A necessary dimming.

Observed from dusk to midnight. Prepare a black candle, a bowl of New Moon Water, a dark cloth, and your Kinship Token or consecrated tool.

At dusk, light the candle. Speak the story of the Lantern-Shark.

Drape the dark cloth over your token. Speak: *"I do not dim this light out of shame. I dim it for protection. The season of the eclipse is upon me."*

Extinguish the candle. Sit in darkness. Meditate on the four instructions of the Salt-Kin's Code for Enduring the Eclipse.

When you are ready, rise. Pour the water onto the earth. Leave your token covered until the season of eclipse has passed.

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5. THE KRILL-SWARM'S ZENITH

The Summer Solstice. Sacred to Abundance, Discernment, and the Still Center.

Hexagram: 55, The Krill-Swarm's Zenith
Color: Gold
Tone: Brilliant, sober, disciplined.

Observed at noon. Go to the shore or stand in direct sunlight. Bring a bowl of water and a gold candle.

Light the candle. Speak the invocation of the Krill-Swarm's Zenith.

Close your eyes. Visualize the golden tide of abundance swirling around you. Part it with your attention. Find the still, dark center. Breathe into it.

Ask: What is truly nourishing, and what is merely blinding? Who can I feed with this abundance?

Cast an offering into the sea or leave it on the earth. Extinguish the candle. Do not linger at the zenith. The sun must descend.

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6. THE GHOST TIDE BANQUET

The First Full Moon of the Harvest Season. Early August.

Hexagram: 3 of Tides (Tarot), The Ghost Tide Banquet
Color: Silver and the pale green of phosphorescence
Tone: Precious, precarious joy. Gratitude and remembrance.

Observed at dusk. Go to the shore with three cups, a bowl of seawater, and a candle.

Light the candle. Pour three cups: one for the living, one for the ancestors, one for the drowned who have no one to pour for them. Drink the first. Raise the second and speak a name. Carry the third to the water's edge and pour it into the sea.

If you wish, perform the Tide-Turning Feast as a communal meal, or observe it in solitude with a simple offering of rice, wine, and a written remembrance.

Speak: *"A ship that sails without toasting the drowned will join them before the tide turns."*

Extinguish the candle. Leave the offering at the tide line.

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7. THE DRAGON KING'S ROAR

The Autumn Equinox. Sacred to the Centered Response and the Shark's Bite.

Hexagram: 51, The Dragon King's Roar, and 21, The Shark's Bite
Color: Iron gray and storm blue
Tone: Powerful, clarifying, decisive.

Observed at dusk. Go to the shore with a bowl of Storm Water or salt water, a black candle, and a small, sharp instrument of severing.

Light the candle. Speak the invocation of the Dragon King's Roar.

Review the year. Ask: What has become stagnant? What must be bitten through? What truth must I speak before the dark season comes?

If something must be severed, name it aloud. Make a single, decisive cutting motion. Speak: *"The Shark does not debate. She bites."*

If a truth must be spoken, roar it—a single, focused, perfectly-calibrated declaration.

Extinguish the candle. Pour the water onto the earth. Do not look back.

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8. THE ANCESTORS' TIDE

The Dark Moon Nearest the Cross-Quarter. Early November.

Hexagram: 59, The Ice-Floe's Dissolution, and 23, The Ghost-Crab's Shedding
Color: White and deep gray
Tone: Somber, releasing, holy. Grief and gratitude mingled.

Observed from dusk to midnight. Prepare a white candle, a bowl of New Moon Water, an anchor or anchor-shaped weight, paper, and a pen.

Light the candle. Speak the invocation of Penglai and the Dragon's Echo.

Write two lists: what you are proud of, and what you regret. Fold the paper. Place it in the bowl of water. Lower the anchor onto it. Hold it there. Listen to the ancestors.

Release the anchor. Pour three cups: one for yourself, one for a named ancestor, one for the drowned who have no one.

Extinguish the candle. Pour the water and paper onto the earth or into the sea. Keep the anchor as a reminder that the past has been weighed.

THE FEASTS OF THE THREE MATRIARCHS

A Note on the Dating of the Feasts

The Chao Wu Lu does not prescribe specific dates for the feasts of the three Matriarchs. The tradition, as it has been transmitted, observes these feasts at times that reflect the character of each Matriarch and her place in the turning year.

The dates given here—Mazu's Tide on the first full moon after the spring equinox, Chen Jinggu's Vigil on the dark moon nearest the summer solstice, Xiwangmu's Stillness on the winter solstice—are traditional observances. They have been kept by Tide Witches for generations, but they are not canonical law.

If these dates do not align with your circumstances, you may adapt them. Mazu may be honored at any full moon. Chen Jinggu may be petitioned whenever an inner drought must be broken. Xiwangmu may be sat with whenever stillness is required. The Matriarchs do not demand punctuality. They ask only for sincerity.

Mazu's Tide (The Feast of the Silver Lady): Observed on the first full moon after the spring equinox. A lantern is lit and set afloat on the water at dusk. The story of Lin Mo's refusal of marriage is recited. Full Moon Water is gathered and consecrated. Color: red and silver.

Chen Jinggu's Vigil (The Feast of the Rain-Bringer): Observed on the dark moon nearest the summer solstice. A vigil from midnight to dawn. The practitioner stands or kneels, ties a white ribbon around her left wrist, and keeps

silence. At the first light, she performs the Rain-Bringer's Invocation. The ribbon is worn for seven days. Color: white and the red-brown of dried blood.

Xiwangmu's Stillness (The Feast of the Queen Mother): Observed on the winter solstice, coinciding with the Kraken's Turning. A vigil from sunset to dawn. The practitioner keeps complete silence, fasting, and becomes the shore against which the waves of the turning year break. At dawn, she speaks: “Stillness is not absence. Stillness is the thing the wave forgets it cannot move.” Color: black and the pale gold of the winter dawn.

APPENDIX: A PSALTER OF THE TIDE

A small collection of invocations, proverbs, and sacred phrases from the Salt Archive, arranged for recitation at any Hour.

The Foundation

“The Dao is the Mother of all things. The sea is the body of the Mother. The tide is her breath. The waves are her speech. The salt is her memory.”

The Stillness

“I am the sand. I am the stone. I am the thing the water cannot dissolve.”

The Descent

“The abyss is not a place you fall into. It is a place you choose to dive into, again and again, until you learn to breathe water as easily as air.”

The Roar

“The shock is not a punishment. It is a test of the soul's center.”

The Bite

“Justice is not a negotiation. It is a bite.”

The Scar

“The light that has survived the eclipse can never be put out again.”

The Crossing

“The Dao is not a harbor. It is an endless, open sea. The sage is not a ship that has arrived, but a vessel that is always, faithfully and joyfully setting sail.”

The Witness

“The sea is the final witness. The register has no end.”

This book is not a law. It is a tide chart. If you miss an Hour, return. When you have wandered, return. The sea does not keep a ledger of your absences. The sea only knows that you are here now, at the edge, with the water touching your feet, and that is enough.

The tide is turning. The Hour is now. The rest is salt.

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The sea does not keep a ledger of your absences.

Neither should we.